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ABSTRACT

This UNESCO-supported case study report documents aspects of New Zealand's integration of the administrative auspices for early childhood care and education (ECCE) into the national education authority, the Department/Ministry of Education. The report is presented in nine sections. Following the introductory section providing a historical overview of early childhood education in New Zealand and describing early childhood services and shifts in their administration, Section 2 outlines the content prior to the decision to integrate ECCE administration into one department, thereby providing the context to give child care the same government support as ECCE services. Section 3 details the rationale for the administrative integration of ECCE. Section 4 presents the processes involved in administrative integration at the national level. Section 5 describes the processes for implementing the three major changes involved in administrative integration: (1) transfer of administrative responsibilities; (2) integrated training programs; and (3) Before Five policies. Section 6 outlines further developments following the administrative transfer of child care to the Department of Education, including the transfer of administration of the Maori language immersion centers from the Department of Maori Affairs to the Ministry of Education and the expansion of post-graduate early childhood study. Section 7 discusses the impact and subsequent developments of administrative integration, including increased participation in ECCE services, increasing concerns about program quality, and development of a strategic plan for early childhood education by the Labour party. Section 8 discusses remaining issues and challenges, including improving the coordination across ministries, achieving even-handedness by the two government funders of ECCE, and improving policy coherence for ECCE services.

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Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination under the Auspices of the Department/ Ministry of Education

A Case Study of New Zealand

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(New Zealand)

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ECCE	Early childhood care and education
ECE	Early childhood education
ECD	Early Childhood Development – publicly-funded agency (was ECDU)
ECS	Early childhood services
ERO	Education Review Office
NZACCC	New Zealand Association of Child Care Centres
NZCA	New Zealand Childcare Association (was NZACCC)
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development
SSC	State Services Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination under the Auspices of the Department/Ministry of Education

A Case Study of New Zealand

I Introduction

Aims and Scope

This case study of New Zealand is prepared within the framework of the UNESCO programme, *Ministerial auspices and financing for early childhood.* The case study was supported by UNESCO as part of its endeavour to promote integrated approaches to early childhood. The aim of the study is to document aspects of New Zealand's integration of administrative auspices for early childhood care and education into the education authority.

Early Childhood Education in New Zealand

Historical overview

New Zealand, an island nation, is located in the South Pacific region. Maori arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand in about the 10th century. They travelled by canoe and by the 12th century were established in settlements along the coastline (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). About six centuries later, in 1642, a Dutch navigator, Abel Tasman reached Aotearoa by sailing ship. In 1769, British ship's captain James Cook and his crew arrived and charted New Zealand. Several decades after this, in 1840, a constitutional agreement called the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the Queen of England and the Maori people.

In the 21st century, New Zealand's main population groups are: European, New Zealand Maori, Pacific Islands (including Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands, Fijian, Niue, Tokelauan, Tuvalu), Chinese, and South-East and South Asian. Settlement patterns of the different groups have varied regionally, and the majority of recent immigrants have settled in the greater Auckland region. The total population is 3.8 million (1999), of whom 14.5 percent are Maori people (the indigenous population) (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

New Zealand's economy relies heavily on agricultural and timber commodities. Information and service industries are increasingly important. The economy is relatively healthy, with a very low rate of inflation.

Since the 1877 Education Act, education in New Zealand schools, has been free, compulsory, and secular. Full-time attendance at school is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16, and students may enrol and receive a free education at any state school from their 5th birthday. Most children do begin school on or near their 5th birthday. Early childhood services (ECS) have been provided by community and privately-run groups for over 120 years. The Government has been giving subsidies to selected community ECS since the early years of this century; and to privately-run (and community) childcare centres for several decades. The same subsidy applied to both types of childcare services, but different subsidy formulae were used for kindergartens and playcentres. Each type of service had a different level of subsidy as well, with kindergarten receiving the most per child.

Diversity of Services

Early childhood services currently recognised by the Secretary of Education (head of the Ministry of Education) include six major groupings: kindergartens, playcentres, education and care services, home-based services, the Correspondence School, and the kohanga reo (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.1). Early childhood education services in New Zealand encompass early education services for children aged from birth to school entry who are enrolled in any licensed or licence-exempt service recognised by the Secretary (Chief Executive) of Education. There is no differentiation by age of children, except for a weighting in levels of subsidy for children under 2 years of age, and a requirement in the regulations for higher ratios of adults to children for this age group. Early childhood education services exclude "primary schools, institutional and other arrangements for sick and abused children, or other specialised services such as foster homes for children with special requirements." (Burns, 1989, p.3)

The specific early childhood services, in order of their inauguration, are:

- Family day care (home-based care, often under the auspices of Barnardos in recent decades);
- Childcare centres (diverse ownership and governance arrangements; some community-based, some commercial; some under franchise; some with affiliations to special-character associations, such as Montessori; some sessional, some all day, some drop-in creches);
- Free kindergartens (free standing, community run, sessional centres for 3 and 4 year olds, where the teachers are College of Education graduates, and the services are governed by regional associations);
- Playcentres (parent-cooperative, sessional centres, where the educators and administrators are parents of enrolled children; governed by regional associations);
- Pre-school classes attached to private primary (elementary) schools;
- Correspondence school early childhood services (distance early education provided by the state correspondence school);
- Nga kohanga reo (school hours centres operating in the Maori language, where the educators and administrators are parents or elders of the children, governed by a national body of venerable Maori elders;
- Pacific Island language groups and early childhood centres (centres which operate in Pacific languages at least part of the time for immigrants from small Pacific nations, where the educators and administrators come from those cultural backgrounds); and
- Anau Ako Pasifika (home-based services for families from Pacific nations).

(Meade, 1999).

One important point is that the majority of early childhood services in New Zealand are community-based, run by Non-Governmental Organisations, with considerable voluntary involvement and fund-raising. Private enterprise individuals or companies run some for profit. A few early childhood centres are associated with private schools or with tertiary institutions (for students who are parents to use while studying). Government provision is the exception. Since the beginning of 1993, the Correspondence School has been the main provider owned and fully-funded by Government, although early childhood services in hospital wards are also fully government funded. Kindergartens are covered by the State Sector Act (1988), which means that the Government is party to employment pay and conditions negotiations. The Government does have a part ownership interest in a proportion of the properties used by community-based ECS. Notwithstanding this ownership interest, the Government only gives grants-in-aid to ECS (except the two fully-funded services – see above). Thus, the Government administers policy for ECCE, but does not administer

the services themselves: committees, boards or owners carry out day-to-day management and administration functions.

Administration

Prior to 1986 in New Zealand, responsibility for funding and administration of early childhood care and education services was split among the Departments of Education, Social Welfare, and Maori Affairs (Ministry of Education, 1998). In 1986, responsibility for childcare moved formally from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, several major administrative shifts occurred – the movement of services to Education, and the implementation of early childhood policy reform known as "Before Five". This case study addresses the rationales for the transition of early childhood care and education services to the "administrative umbrella" of the Department of Education.

II Context of the Decision

This section outlines the context during the period prior to the decision to integrate early childhood care and education (ECCE)[1] administration into one department. This first decision provides the context for the second significant decision, namely to give childcare the same government support as sessional education and care services.

The Era of Minimal Support for Childcare Services

In the early decades of the twentieth century, for a variety of reasons, it was "extraordinarily difficult to get acceptance of the need for full-day childcare no matter how great the need, and children were believed to be better off in their own homes no matter how miserable their conditions may be. Social policy and public opinion both operated to keep mothers at home." (Social Advisory Council, 1985, p.8) Childcare services were less acceptable than other early childhood services (ECS); indeed many thought they were harmful. The social beliefs were that children must be taken care of by their own parents (read mother) at home.

Susan Easting (1994, p.48) said in relation to the nineteenth century: "the stigma of 'care' being a service for problem children from 'inadequate' families (for example where the mother went out to work) developed very early on. Gradually the governments of the time began to provide some support for 'educational' activities [kindergartens]." But there was no formal support for childcare services, even for those that wanted to improve standards.

It wasn't until there was a 'baby farming' scandal in 1958 that necessitated the forcible removal of children from a centre run in a private home that Child Care Centre Regulations were formulated. They became official in 1960. The regulations focused on physical environments, not the training or competencies of the caregivers, although the scandal was about the woman's very evident lack of knowledge about meeting the needs of infants and toddlers. The Child Welfare Division, situated in the then Department of Education[2], administered them. Thus, ironically, the Department of Education was where the formal recognition of childcare services by government began (albeit for negative reasons).

---

[1] In the years around the integration of care and education the sector was referred to as early childhood care and education. However, in the 1990s, after the education orientation was accepted, the language changed to early childhood education.

[2] In that era, the semi-autonomous Child Welfare Division was responsible for wards of the state and child protection and social work functions in relation to children and their families. The Department of Education became the Ministry of Education in 1989 as part of the reforms in education administration.

In a sense, the Child Care Centre Regulations 1960 created the means to define an array of different types of ECS as one group. No movement or national organisation akin to the kindergarten and playcentre movements had been established to provide services for the substitute care of young children. There were a variety of stand-alone services. Moreover, they covered more than welfare situations; for example, private, fee-paying kindergartens in middle- and high-income suburbs and parent cooperative centres (run and funded by committees of parents) were covered by the regulations.

Childcare services were latecomers in gaining government funding even though they were amongst the first services to be established after European colonization. From the early 1900s, kindergartens began the long slow process of negotiating reasonable funding levels with successive governments. After the Second World War, playcentres followed their lead. Incrementally, reasonable levels of grants-in-aid came to be paid to kindergartens and playcentres for operational and capital costs. Their national leaders lobbied for categories of funding appropriate to their style of delivery and usually received something in a year or two. However, childcare – whether community-based or privately-run – remained the 'Cinderella' service.

The lack of a national organisation for childcare services probably contributed to the lack of government support. One licensee, Sonja Davies, after her case for government funding for childcare services in general was rejected, set up the New Zealand Association of Child Care Centres in the early 1960s (Davies, 1997). That organisation, and Sonja Davies as its founding leader, began to campaign for government and society to give to childcare the *same support* they gave to sessional early *education* services. The "glacial" progress in support for childcare appears to be the result of several resistance factors. First, childcare services were perceived to be full-day to allow women to go into paid employment (although in reality they were a diverse range of services, many of them being sessional with an education programme) and there was caution about the effects of full-day care on children. Second, there was resistance to giving support to women in paid work (childcare was seen as a "private good" for these women). In addition, there was resistance to Government funding going to childcare centres that were privately owned.

Some financial assistance in the form of fees subsidies for families who were unable to meet the full cost of care was introduced in 1974, and was reconstituted in the early 1980s to include financial incentives for the employment of trained staff. Some capital grants were also given.[3] The training scheme set up by Royal Society for the Promotion of Health in conjunction with the New Zealand Association of Child Care Centres was initially supported by grants from the Lottery Board. Government support for childcare centres at a similar level to kindergarten was not to be achieved until 1989. Around the same period (1990), the New Zealand Childcare Association training scheme was able to access the same per-student Government grant as any tertiary institution.

Structural change

In 1972, when it was decided to replace the old Social Security Department with a Department of Social Welfare, the new department became an umbrella for any government function with a welfare label. So the Child Welfare Division including childcare administration, which was under the Department of Education, went as a whole into the new department. Ironically, this transfer happened when commentators were beginning to talk about *early childhood education and care*, that is seeing childcare as linked to education (or, in one committee's eyes, see below, seeing education as linked to care). Those who thought childcare services would have a chance of better government funding as welfare-related services endorsed the transfer to the Department of Social Welfare. This was especially the case where services had a charitable status. Others questioned the relocation of childcare administration because childcare centres were not primarily about child protection.

[3] The capital grants policy was suspended between 1979 and 1983.

The Development of a National Constituency for Childcare in the 1970s

The 70s decade did not start well for childcare. The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-School Education, published in 1971, noted the increasing need for childcare services but, like an earlier committee (the Bailey Consultative Committee, 1947), rejected recommending government support for childcare services. Instead, it urged kindergartens, playcentres, industry and business to meet the need for childcare for solo mothers and mothers in employment.

> With their experience, organisation, and dedication the [kindergarten] union and the [playcentre] federation have important supportive roles to play in seeing that these new pre-schools develop in a way which ensures that appropriate and effective attention is given to the *education*, as well as care, of the children for whom they cater. (1971, p.30)

It did, however, recommend: "that wherever possible, those working in the independent sector [read childcare] take their training through courses provided for kindergarten and playcentre [recommended to be in colleges of education and university extension departments], " and "that, when sufficient time has been given to allow those in the independent sector to improve their qualifications, the regulations be changed to make it a requirement of registration that at least one staff member ... hold an approved educational qualification." (Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-School Education, 1971, pp.115-6) After many more years of activism, the former recommendation happened in conjunction with changes to kindergarten training in the mid-1980s (more on this later), and the latter recommendation is announced policy, to be implemented between 2002 and 2005!

In 1972, as described above, childcare administration was transferred to the Department of Social Welfare, despite the Committee of Inquiry's recommendations about better links between childcare and kindergartens and playcentres.

Perhaps partly as a reaction to these events, from the early 1970s in many communities lobbyists became stronger in voicing their dreams of liberation for women, of acceptance of childcare, and of adequate financial support for childcare. The changes sought are succinctly expressed in this placard seen at a women's liberation march in 1971, cited by Helen May (2000, p.56).

> Free Mum
>
> Free Dad
>
> Free me
>
> Free childcare

May describes the 1970s as a period when "childcare was undergoing a dramatic transformation from a service for women who 'unfortunately' had to be employed out of the home, to a service enabling independence and liberation for women from full-time mothering." (Ibid) Despite the lack of official recognition, the number of parents using childcare services had grown dramatically. Moreover, "as the level of education rose amongst women, ... women began to enter occupations and professions in which they had earlier hardly gained a foothold, the demand for childcare services began to arise from women who were well placed to present the argument for childcare of good quality and to do something about it." (Social Advisory Council, 1985, p.9)

These women were better equipped to confront the apparent tension between care, which benefits women as well as children, and education, which benefits children. Their arguments were to improve the quality of childcare so that children gain educational benefits. This new discourse was a paradigm shift. The tension surrounding childcare services had been heightened in the 50s after John Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation - based on children who were deprived of stimulation - became widely known (McDonald, 1977). This needed to be managed. "Advocates for

childcare agreed with Bowlby's concern for children's emotional well-being in childcare settings, but they were adamant that the issue was one of quality care." (May, 2001, p.135) In 1979, research statistical evidence was available to substantiate what women had observed – good quality early childhood care and education gave children the foundations they needed for later learning (e.g., Ruopp et al, 1979).

However, individual lobbying, or a single organisation lobbying, was not sufficient to change attitudes and activate political change. A president of the New Zealand Association of Child Care Centres recalled that the level of resistance indicated, "advocates [for childcare] were up against something ... bigger than just childcare. ... As long as you did nothing for childcare you could keep women in their place." (Cathy Lythe, cited in May, 2001, p.140).

Achieving change needed a national constituency of advocates for early childhood education and care. Elsewhere Anne Meade has described a series of meetings and conferences in the 1970s that created forums for people to speak for early childhood education and care in general[4] (whereas lobbyists in the past had spoken for particularly organisations). "It was possible for a network of early childhood advocates in the community to develop a discourse, advance it and keep it moving in a variety of places," (see May, 2001, p.122). A set of agreed-upon principles for policy for improving the quality of all ECS slowly emerged. Allies in a range of sectors – women's organisations, political groups, trade unions, and other education sectors – added their voice to ensuring ECCE was on the public agenda. (Ibid.)

In the mid- and late-1970s, the focus of attention amongst the constituency became the administrative structures for childcare, although the review/change sought was expressed broadly. In March 1976, the Prime Minister convened a Conference on Women in Social and Economic Development. Delegates at that Conference passed the following recommendations:

> That within childhood care and education there be equal provisions of support for comparable services. [Recommendation 30]
>
> That immediate steps be taken to place day-care centres registered with the Department of Social Welfare under the Child Care Centre Regulations 1960 on an equal footing with kindergartens and playcentres for the receipt of financial support. That steps be taken to improve and maintain the educational standards of day-care centres including requirements for employing trained staff. [Recommendation 31]
>
> That the Minister of State Services arrange as a matter of priority for the State Services Commission to take all necessary steps in consulting with representatives of the Departments of Social Welfare, Education, Labour, Health, Maori Affairs, and the Ministry of Local Government and Recreation and Sport, to devise an effective administration for policies relating to early childhood education and care. That in doing this there be full consultation with women's organisations, municipal authorities, and interested voluntary organisations with a view to rationalizing local provision of early childhood are and education. [Recommendation 32]

Recommendation 32 was referred to a national advisory group on pre-school education, which endorsed it in October of the same year. It was referred on to the Minister of Education who referred it to the Minister of State Services in March 1977.

---

[4] They included: a Parliamentary select committee on discrimination of women, numerous meetings during International Women's Year in 1975, the United Women's Convention in 1975, the Education and the Equality of the Sexes Conference in 1975, the Early Childhood Convention in 1975, the Conference on Women in Social and Economic Development in 1976, and the New Zealand/OECD Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in 1978, and events in International Year of the Child in 1979 and the second Early Childhood Convention in 1979.

State Services Commission Working Group on Early Childhood Care and Education

Five months after the referral to the Minister of State Services, the State Service Commission (SSC) set up a four-person working group in August 1977. A reconvened working group did not report finally until June 1980. Early childhood expertise was minimal in the beginning until the main national early childhood organisations formed a delegation to lobby the SSC and the situation was rectified by some changes in membership. Around the same time, attention was drawn to the existence of the working group, their focus and their position about education and care at the New Zealand/OECD Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in 1978. Delegates at that conference endorsed coordinated services. Moreover, they sought to put integrated training for childcare workers and kindergarten teachers on the table again (after nothing had happened to that particular recommendation made by the 1971 Committee of Inquiry into Preschool Education). An ad hoc committee was established by the plenary session of the conference to monitor the progress of the coordination agenda.

For the duration of SSC working group's meetings the government took no action relating to childcare services. After their report came out, the government again did nothing to change policy. Then, in 1982, it announced it would not consider the report for two years. Perhaps the recommendations were too radical for the politicians of the day?

The main recommendations of the SSC Working Group (1980) were:

Re-allocation of departmental responsibilities

There [would] be a re-allocation of responsibilities between the Departments of Education and Social Welfare, in regard to childcare centres. Education should be responsible for the inspection and 'recognition' of centres, and the advisory, funding (including capital subsidy and training functions). The welfare functions, including the capitation subsidy scheme, for children in need, should remain with social welfare. (pp.34-35)

Proposed administration and planning

The present District Pre-school Committees [would] be replaced by Early Childhood Committees. (p.67)

The present National Advisory Committee on Pre-school Education should be replaced by a National Early Childhood Council. (Ibid.)[5]

The Early Childhood Council and Early Childhood Committees should be granted some control over financial resources and their allocation. (p.68)

Funding

The principle of equitable funding for child care be accepted by the government, and a funding policy developed. (p.91)

Funding [would] be based not on the welfare principle, but on the principle of contribution to a recognized service. (p.91)[6]

The goal [would be] to proceed in stages to 50% funding of costs to parents with children in day care. (p.92)

[5] The name was to signify a broadening of the scope of the committee to encompass childcare and a wider age range of children.

[6] The shift in principle meant a shift in the unit targeted for funding – off "needy" families and on to services, providing they met funding criteria.

In 1979, childcare workers formed the Early Childhood Workers Union, which was registered in 1982. Two lobbyists - one involved in childcare and one in a teachers union – took this initiative in order to apply some industrial 'noise' to the campaign for childcare funding. In 1990, this union was to combine with the kindergarten teachers union after the *Before Five* reforms saw government put childcare on the same footing as other early childhood services. (May, 1997, p.22)

Maori Renaissance: Te Kohanga Reo is Born

In 1982, in quite different networks, a new movement was established for Maori families: Te Kohanga Reo. The idea was born at a national meeting of Maori tribal leaders in 1981. The two main purposes of nga kohanga reo (language nests) were - and still are - to strengthen and empower Maori families, and to save and maintain te reo Maori (the Maori language). Maori people offering early childhood education in the Maori language serve these purposes. Although the Department of Maori Affairs initially funded only a handful of pilot kohanga reo the vision was so attractive to Maori people that dozens of kohanga reo were quickly established, funded by Maori communities. The Child Care Centre Regulations were their regulatory guidelines. Thus, from the 1980s any policy change for childcare services was to have implications for nga kohanga reo as well. For example, whenever the fees subsidy was reviewed, kohanga reo gained (or suffered) from any increases (or decreases). Two-thirds of the growth of childcare numbers from 1981 to 1985 was in licensed kohanga reo. Later, their statistics were separated from those relating to childcare centres.

Childcare on the Policy Agenda

In November 1984, officials in the Department of Education convened a 30-person course of national leaders, officials and academics from a range of backgrounds and organisations, and with expertise in ECCE. Their tasks for the week were:

- To develop aims and objectives for ECCE,
- To consider how these aims and objectives could be translated into practice,
- To establish priorities, and
- To formulate a five-year plan for implementation.

In the course report, it can be seen that the membership arrived at a set of objectives that, *inter alia,* had considerable overlap with the Labour Government's political objectives (see below). They included: that funding for childcare be provided to achieve equal access, that funding for ECCE become more equitable with other education sectors, that a common core of training be explored and that all ECCE be the responsibility of the Department of Education. (*Aims and Objectives in Early Childhood Care and Education* course report, November 1984)

In late 1984, a change in government occurred: a Labour Government was elected. Early childhood issues were stated to be a major part of their political agenda. People involved in shaping party policy for women and for education had been convinced by research that good quality early childhood education had lasting effects. (e.g., Lazar & Darlington, 1982; Weikart, 1982) They understood that ECCE paid dividends because of its preventive powers. In order to realize the potential of good quality ECCE, the new government in coming to office pledged to:

- address funding inequities: of the early childhood sector in relation to the school system, and of childcare in relation to kindergarten and playcentres;
- transfer the administration of childcare to the Department of Education (in recognition that education and care in settings for children are inseparable and an educational emphasis results in better outcomes for children); and
- improve and lengthen the training of all early childhood educators.

At last, childcare was on the government agenda. The reasons are given in the next section.

III Rationale for Administrative Integration of Early Childhood Care and Education

The rationale for the integration of ECCE shifted across time. When research showed that quality early childhood education made a lasting difference to outcomes for children, politicians accorded early education a higher priority for government funding of services and for trained staff. This section describes the range of rationale – from the liberation of women, to caring support for children and their families and community, to quality services and human rights.

In the 1970s, it was community groups who developed the rationale. They argued that the main reason for state support for childcare generally, not just for 'needy' families, was for the liberation for women. The interests of mothers were promoted: "full-time mothering was not necessarily healthy for children and mothers," (May, 2000, p.56). However, linking childcare to the liberation of women brought advocates for childcare face to face with resistance. After many heated debates, involving a backlash against the women's movement and childcare, advocates came to the realization that increased government support for childcare services would only come about if childcare were linked to *educational* contexts, with the child as the beneficiary.[7]

It was necessary to argue (and show) that quality childcare was beneficial (not harmful) for children and was an acceptable form of early education for children and support for families. Two studies in the USA were key in providing evidence of benefits of early education. (Lazar & Darlington, 1982; Weikart, 1982) When children's interests were being considered, it was argued that all children are entitled to quality care and education in whatever early childhood service they attended, (see May, 2000, p.56; & 2001, p.122).

The SSC working group advanced the discourse.

> The working group accepts that whatever is provided for young children is in one sense care, and in another sense education. The two things in relation to the young child cannot easily be distinguished. One cannot provide care for young children without their learning ideas, habits and attitudes; nor can one educate them without at the same time providing care. (The same point can be made about the work of the primary school.)"
> (State Services Commission Working Group, 1980, pp.3-4)

The working group saw education and care as two sides of a coin, so to speak, and their argument – once accepted - was to become an important part of the rationale for the policy changes that occurred from the mid-1980s. "A broader concept of early childhood care and education replaced the notion of pre-school education," (May, 2001, p.122). This happened once childcare gained wider recognition, and a new generic term was needed for the expanded sector.

People came to recognize that ECS could perform even wider functions than care and education when they learned about Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecology of human development. Bronfenbrenner visited New Zealand in 1979. As people came to understand his theory (1979), "[it] allowed different early childhood groups to see a

[7] In New Zealand, the Department of Education was generally favoured as the appropriate one, partly due to a paradigm shift related to the research evidence on the benefits of early childhood education. Within the Department of Education, the Director General was perceived to be possibly more supportive than some of the senior managers of the integration of childcare.

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place and a role for themselves, whereas earlier developmental theories had judged particular early childhood institutions as acceptable or unacceptable according to the time spent by children in the daily presence of their mothers. The 'changing model' for ECS was moving beyond the provision of pre-school education for the benefit of the child alone. A range of services should provide 'caring support' to children, families and communities." (May, 2001, p.128)

The opening paragraph of the report of the *Aims and Objectives in Early Childhood Care and Education* course (1984) reflects this view, and also introduces a human rights rationale.

> Childhood is a time for the celebration of life, family and the community. Family and the community should share in supporting the growth and development of caring, healthy, curious and creative children. Access to quality ECCE services is a human right and providing these has social and economic benefits for society. (Ibid, p.2)

In 1985, the view of the wider role of ECS was espoused for childcare services in particular in the Social Advisory Council report, *Child Care Services: Impacts and opportunities.* Their philosophy of childcare was that it benefits society by "the enhancement of children's development, including the promotion of cultural identity, and the social integration of children with disabilities; the support of families [in bringing up children]; and the facilitation of participation in society, (1985, p.30).

As people adopted the concept of ECCE, the focus shifted once again. The focus became one of equitable resources for all types of ECS so that all services could provide quality early education. "The contribution from central government should be sufficient to give the funding of childcare services equity with that of other ECCE services," (ibid).

The New Zealand Government's Cabinet Social Equity Committee invited Anne Meade to chair the Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group, convened in January 1988. The membership of this working group included officials from the Departments of Education, Social Welfare, and Health, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Treasury, and the State Services Commission, also Maori and Pacific Islands community representatives, and a lecturer in education (Butterworth & Butterworth, 2000; Department of Education (1988). [8] Equity was one of the key concepts in the terms of reference of the working group. [8] Their tasks included advising on the role and responsibility of government in relation to the need for equitable access to ECCE, and the need for more equitable funding and funding processes. (Department of Education, 1988) The rationale for government to be involved in all ECS stated in their report contained three elements:

> "*Features which are in the interests of the child* – that is, good quality services that meets the needs and rights of the child,
>
> *Features which are in the interests of the caregivers* - ... this means accessibility to affordable services ...
>
> *Features which are in the interests of cultural survival and transmission to succeeding generations* – that is, opportunities for young children to learn the language and other elements of their own culture ... and for this learning opportunity to be available to the parents ... as well.

[8] Several working groups in that time period were asked to include a focus on equity, including one on post-compulsory education and training.

> "It is essential for all three elements to be present in every early childhood care and education arrangement." (*Education to be More*, 1988, p.6)

Thus, this working group, in saying that services needed to be fair and equitable to children, parents and cultures, added a novel application to the concept of equity.

Many of the rationale statements in the 1990s and 1990s referred to the quality of ECCE being the important factor, rather than the type of service. The advocates wanted quality across all service types and thought this was more feasible with integration. Research indicated that for children to benefit quality ECCE was necessary. Links were made between quality early education and adequate training: centres with staff who had ECE-related training provided a better quality of care". (e.g., Ruopp et al, 1979; Phillips, McCartney & Scarr, (1987)

The *Report of the Working Party on Three Year Training for Kindergarten Teachers* (1986) recommended the extension of kindergarten training to three years. At that time, kindergarten teachers had two years of training and childcare one-year training. Could there be a difference in length in kindergarten and childcare training programmes, when the integration of childcare and education was underway? No. Advocates for common training did not rest their case only on equity arguments. They called on the caring-support-to-children-families-and-communities argument from Bronfenbrenner's theory as well, and talked about the complexity of working in today's childcare centres. "It is therefore essential to provide childcare workers with longer and more in-depth training programmes to allow them to develop this complex array of skills." (*Report on the Working Party on Childcare Training*, 1986, p.9) The working party on childcare training argued for integrating childcare training into the extended kindergarten training. Its case was bolstered by new regulatory requirement that each childcare centre should have a trained supervisor. (Childcare Centre Regulations, 1985)

Around that time when equity of training provision was proposed, arguments also began to be made that the worth of work in early childhood education was equal to that of the other education sectors.

More recently, after New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights have been emphasized as part of the rationale for maintaining equitable arrangements for all ECS.

IV Processes of Administrative Integration

The new Labour government's first action - vis-à-vis childcare services – was to promulgate revised the regulations pertaining to childcare centres (1985). (The revision had been initiated by the previous government in the early 1980s.) Two new requirements in the 1985 regulations foreshadowed a closer relationship with education: each centre had to have a trained supervisor, and each centre was to offer an educational programme for the children.

The second significant action was a Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education, convened by Russell Marshall, Minister of Education in Parliament Buildings. The third important action was structural and involved the "re-allocation of [departmental] responsibilities" in 1986, in line with the State Services Commission Working Group recommendations. The fourth decision was to integrate childcare training and kindergarten training in state tertiary education institutions, starting in 1988. The last significant set of decisions relating to funding and other support for childcare services did not happen until the wide-ranging education reforms in 1988-89 (see *Before Five*, 1988).

The processes that led to these actions were:

- Election pledges were made,

- Key government Ministers championed the pledges once in office – at times dealing with resistance,
- Regulations were revised,
- Working groups were convened and national forums held,
- Cabinet made decisions, and
- Implementation groups and officials developed the action steps.

A skeletal outline of the chronology follows.

1984	Labour manifesto finalized
1984	*Aims and Objectives in Early Childhood Care & Education* national course
1985	Revised Childcare Centre Regulations
1985	*Child Care Services: Impact and opportunities* report
1985	*Training Issues in Early Childhood Care and Education* national course
1985	*Report of the Joint Ministerial Working Party for the Transition of Administration of Childcare from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education*
1985	Ministerial Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education, Parliament Buildings
1986	*Legislation was amended to transfer childcare from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education*
1986	Report of the Working Party on Three Year Training for Kindergarten Teachers
1986	Report of the Working Party on Childcare Training
1987	New policy: integrated three-year training for childcare and kindergarten services
1988	*Education to be More: Report of the Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group (green paper)*
1988	*Before Five: Early Childhood Care and Education in New Zealand (white paper)*
1988	*Government Review of Te Kohanga Reo* report
1989	Six *Before Five* implementation working party reports
1990	Common funding formula for all ECS, including kohanga reo introduced
1990	Staged plan for common qualifications requirements for childcare and kindergarten services

Further elaboration on these events follows. Soon after coming to office, the government set up a Joint Ministerial Working Party, convened by the Ministers of Education and Social Welfare, to make recommendations on the transfer of statutory responsibility for childcare services from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education. In the *Report of the Joint Ministerial Working Party for the Transition of Administration of Childcare from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education*, dated November 1985, the main recommendations were:

- To transfer of childcare services, with the recommended date of 1 April 1986; and
- To fund childcare staffing, training, advisory/support services and strengthen early childhood education in the Department of Education.

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Two issues could not be resolved (funding of private centres, and accountability). (Ibid, p.6)

In December 1985, the report was taken to a Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education, convened at Parliament by the Minister of Education. The two Ministers made a joint announcement at the Forum that the transfer of administrative services would occur, but not until 1 July 1986 to allow legislation to be changed. The other recommendations were to be considered in the 1986 Budget round. As well as hearing keynote speeches, Forum participants went into discussion groups to develop recommendations on the following topics: delivery systems, funding, training, advisory support, administration, and meeting community needs. These discussion group reports were to inform policy development in 1986. The integration meant that government funding was transferred from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education for staffing and operations. The Department of Education became the employer of officials who licensed and monitored childcare centres. This caused some concern amongst Department of Social Welfare senior managers related to the loss of a positive component of their work, which in turn had an impact on the seniority of at least one manager.

Early the next year, government processes to obtain legislative backing for what had been an election pledge were set in place. Just in time to be included in the legislation, Barnardos New Zealand, the main provider of family care services in New Zealand, went to the chief executive of the Department of Social Welfare and said they wanted family day administration to be transferred to the Department of Education as well. Historically, home-based services had been seen to have a preventive and supportive role that fitted with the Department of Social Welfare. Now, however, Barnardos felt it would be strategically advantageous to 'swim with the tide' and join all other early childhood care and education services under the auspices of the Department of Education. This request did not please the Department of Social Welfare but it was agreed to.

The structural change manifested in the transfer of childcare officers, files and funds to the Department of Education was a necessary but not sufficient change for childcare to be treated in an even-handed manner. It set the context for further changes to address funding and training equity issues to ensure quality provision.

Training issues had started to be addressed in May 1985 at a weeklong course with selected members coming from a wide range of ECCE backgrounds. The outcomes wanted in five years included:

- Integration of childcare and kindergarten training,
- Qualification paths from different types of training to the [qualification] needed,
- A core curriculum for training courses,
- Equity in funding training for different training providers,
- Parity of salaries for those with the same qualification.

The Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education at Parliament gave strong supported for extension and integration of training courses. After the Forum, the two government working parties on training described in Section 3 were set up.

Little action followed these recommendations from the Forum and working parties dominated by community groups. The relevant sections in the Department of Education demonstrated low commitment to the ECCE agenda. The knowledge and understanding of a diverse ECE sector outside the compulsory sector was often minimal. Most officials knew little about the benefits of ECE. However the endorsement from the Forum and the working groups reinforced, in the Minister of Education's mind, the direction for policy change. The Director General of Education was also supportive.

New policies were needed to lift the quality of ECCE and the status of those who worked within the sector. Then when employment discussions on pay parity for kindergarten teachers came to an early closure in 1986 because their training and qualifications were not comparable with those of schoolteachers, the Minister of Education acted. He directed officials to progress three-year training for kindergarten teachers and integrated training for childcare workers and kindergarten teachers. Cabinet supported his advice and made the decision to integrate childcare and kindergarten training in three-year courses.

> "This placed New Zealand at the international forefront of progressive thinking on tertiary early childhood training. Most countries were, and still are, confounded by separate track training for services historically set up as either care or education. ... [T]here was some scepticism in childcare circles whether colleges of education could transform their kindergarten orientation to be inclusive of the needs of childcare." (May, 1997, p.23)

This scepticism and the kindergarten focus took time and professional development to overcome. As well, there were (and still are) some employers who resisted higher qualifications so that those in childcare can become registered teachers – usually for power and economic reasons.

In 1987-88, Cabinet set in train wide ranging reforms to the administration of education in New Zealand. As part of these reform processes, the Cabinet Social Equity Committee set up a Working Group on Early Childhood Care and Education. As could be expected, equity was a key principle in its terms of reference. Its main recommendations applied to all early childhood care and education services.

The green paper, *Education to be More* was published in September 1988. By December, Cabinet had made its decisions to accept most of the recommendations. The policies were announced early the following year in a statement called *Before Five* (1988). A new innovation was the introduction of charters developed by each service (setting out its objectives, policies and practices) if the service wanted government funding. The new Ministry of Education was to grant licences, approve charters and deliver funding, as well as develop government policy. Another government department, the Education Review Office (ERO), was to review compliance with government regulations and each service's own charter objectives and policies annually. Several agencies were to be set up to help establish new ECS, and provide advice and support to services and families, with most of them required to do this for schools as well.

The funding to go with the policies, announced in the 1989 Budget, finally gave childcare something relatively equitable in terms of support. All services received from the Ministry of Education the same per child, per hour subsidy, with an extra weighting for children under 2 years of age. The Department of Social Welfare continued to pay a means-tested fees subsidy to reduce costs to low-income families and/or those with high health/disability needs.

V Implementation

This section describes the processes for implementing the three major changes:

- Transfer of administrative responsibilities,
- Integrated training programmes,
- Before Five policies.

Transfer of Administrative Responsibilities for Childcare Services

Officials in the Department of Education experienced a very big increase in workload in the transition period of 1986. There was a considerable amount of work to be done internally, as well as ensuring all administrative functions were performed effectively externally for early childhood services. The early childhood division's objectives for the year included:

- To complete a plan for the transfer of childcare from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education,
- To develop a training/induction package for the staff in the restructured division,
- To review and modify the staff manual.

Internally, there was an influx of additional staff moving between departments, and new management in the early childhood division. The old sections responsible for childcare administration in the Department of Social Welfare were abolished, and their files were transferred to the Department of Education. A structure had to be designed for the Head Office of the Department of Education, as well as for regional offices. Against advice from at least two working groups, the Director of the division in Head Office was located on the fourth tier from the Director General. (The advice had been second or third tier). Appointments processes, salary determinations, systems development, and office buildings arrangements all needed attention in a short time span. Some of these were not finalised until several months after the transfer of responsibilities.

Externally, administrative functioning needed to continue smoothly. Departmental guidelines had to be revised and staff training given to ensure consistent handling of procedures occurred nationwide. Shortly before 1 July 1986, new guidelines were issued to all childcare services describing the procedures for payment of grants for trained staff, and procedures for grants to childcare centres, family day care schemes and other recipients. A range of other administrative procedures was also described. These guidelines were also important for the induction of departmental officials with responsibilities for childcare administration. These officials included finance and property clerks, as well as early childhood field staff (known as education officers, early childhood education).

Implementation of Integrated Training Programmes

The Report of the Consultative Committee on Preschool Education of 1971 ("the Hill Report") advocated the importance of training. This Committee first noted the desirability of developing a 3-year college course to bring kindergarten training "in line with primary school training" and with overseas trends, and to "give further recognition to the importance and status of the pre-school teacher" (Report of the Consultative Committee on Preschool Education, 1971, p. 91).

In 1987, 3-year integrated training courses were introduced in colleges of education. These courses led to a Diploma of Education (early childhood teaching), which became regarded as a "benchmark" early childhood qualification for teachers working both in kindergartens and in childcare centres (Meade, Podmore, May, Te One, & Brown, 1998; Moss, 2000).

The change in policy to integrated training was implemented by a staged plan over three years. Two teacher education institutions began integrated training per year. In each case, prior to the introduction of the new programmes, an implementation committee met several times at the teacher education institution/s concerned to plan the Programme curriculum (but not the actual courses) and draft policy for entry criteria, practicum arrangements, and graduate competencies. As teacher education was controlled to a considerable extent by the Department of Education in the 1980s, departmental officers had a considerable say in the guidelines for these short-life committees. The membership of the groups included key stakeholders such as the

kindergarten and childcare training directors in the district, early childhood service managers, union representatives and departmental officers. Kindergarten and childcare interests were represented.

Implementation of *Before Five* policies

As was the case for the reforms in the administration of the schools and tertiary sectors, a Before Five implementation unit was set up in the Department of Education. Its roles included:

- Project planning and management,
- To draft terms of reference and provide support to the implementation working groups,
- To call for nominations and select members of the working groups,
- To ensure working group reports were reviewed by selected education experts and Maori elders prior to going to Cabinet,
- Liaison with key people doing parallel or cross-sector reform implementation projects, and
- Development of papers for Cabinet consideration.

There were eight Before Five implementation working groups: the Correspondence School; National Guidelines, Charters and Licences; Bulk Grants, Discretionary Grants and Loans; Staffing; Qualifications, Accreditation, and Training; the Early Childhood Development Unit; Special Education; and Property. On each one, there was a mix of officials, early childhood services management, practitioners nominated by unions, and academic researchers. The main types of services – kindergarten, childcare, playcentre and kohanga reo – were also represented. Despite an extremely tight timeline, all working groups consulted with other working groups and key stakeholders.

The implementation working group reports were completed by the end of April 1989, and by May Cabinet had confirmed the structures for the reformed administrative system. As stated in section 4, the policy-focused Ministry of Education would provide the auspices for all ECS. Another department, called the Education Review Office, would review all licensed ECS annually to evaluate their performance.

The implementation units, and then the new structures from 1 October 1989 or from when the key appointments were made, were responsible for implementing the new policies and procedures set out in the *Before Five* document or in Cabinet decisions based on the implementation working group reports.

VI Consolidation and Consequences

This section outlines some further developments following the administrative transfer of childcare to the Department of Education. Subsequent changes were made to the administrative arrangements for the kohanga reo (Maori language immersion centres). The administrative transfer also influenced the extent to which the early childhood services were treated equally in the 1989 education reforms, the expansion of postgraduate early childhood study, and the inclusive nature of the early childhood curriculum which was subsequently developed.

Transfer of Te Kohanga Reo from Department of Maori Affairs to Ministry of Education

Nga kohanga reo, the Maori-language immersion centres, were developed with a stated *kaupapa* (set of objectives) that focused on: *te reo* (the language – speaking in Maori), *whanau* ("traditional extended family arrangement whereby children were socialised in an environment surrounded by the presence of grandparents, relatives and other

children", including a cluster of specific values), and *mana motuhake* ("the spirit of Maori autonomy" – achieving Maori control over Maori resources) (Ka'ai, 1991, p. 40-42).

These objectives illustrate how the kohanga reo, a Maori initiative, was seen as more than a language nest or an early childhood service (Royal Tangaere, 1996). It is perhaps inevitable, then, that there were voices questioning the appropriateness of the administrative transfer of the kohanga reo from the Department of Maori Affairs to the Department of Education.

In 1986, representatives of the kohanga reo expressed reservations about the proposed administrative shift to education. An article noting the impressive presence of local kohanga reo children at the Forum on Early Childhood in late 1985, included several cautionary comments. Moving to funding via Vote Education was clearly a concern for the kohanga reo:

> The shift to Education Department administration, so loudly demanded by the childcare services, is not so eagerly sought by the kohanga reo...There are fears that, with four major pre-school services and a host of smaller ones to feed, the Education Department cake is going to be sliced rather thin, and some services will end up with only a few crumbs.
> (*Tu Tangata*, 1986, p. 12).

Views from the Department of Education were reassuring, with the Director of Early Childhood Education commenting that she did not envisage that happening because of the way the early childhood services had grown in New Zealand:

> "each group has been independent of the other and has lobbied only for itself. Some anomalies have developed, and we will inherit the existing situation. But from here on in, we will develop policy and put it up to government for funding. We won't have to stretch our existing resources over everybody"
> (*Tu Tangata*, 1986, p. 13).

A submission prepared in 1988 in response to the report *Education to Be More* formally states some concerns from a kohanga reo perspective. This paper commends the Early Childhood Working Group and Anne Meade, who prepared *Education to Be More*, and endorses the principles of equity of funding in it. However, the final concluding statement is:

> We do not believe there is, at this stage there is the depth of expertise within the Ministry of Education, at all points of the proposed delivery structure to suitably serve the needs of Kohanga Reo. (Te Poho-Orawiri Kohanga Reo, Te Whakaruruhau Kohanga Reo, 1988, p. 7)

In 1988 there was a government review of the Kohanga Reo. At the time of the review, Government funding of the kohanga reo was still administered through the Department of Maori Affairs. The Government Review Team (1988) reported that "the administrative structure is appropriate for the moment, and is still developing in response to its needs. Financial and cultural accountability arrangements are satisfactory." (p.47).

By April 1989, the government was finalising the funding models and levels for implementing *Before Five* policies. Cabinet had received the report from the working party set up to review Te Kohanga Reo. It decided it needed to consider future funding for Te Kohanga Reo alongside the funding proposals for ECS covered in *Before Five*. Officials from a range of relevant departments met, took into account the reports from

the Before Five implementation working groups, and recommended to Cabinet that bulk grants (comparable to bulk grants to ECS) be given to Te Kohanga Reo National Trust for allocation. They also recommended that from 1 July 1990 the bulk funds come from the Ministry of Education's budget (rather than 1 February 1990 for other ECS). This had more major implications than simply determining which departmental budget would be used. From that date, the Ministry of Education would be responsible for negotiating with Te Kohanga Reo and would also be required to work with the Ministry of Maori Affairs in developing relevant policy.

In addition, it was anticipated that the Kohanga Reo National Trust would devolve its responsibilities to iwi (tribal) bodies in 1994, a decision that was not implemented in the 1990s. This has been reiterated in a very recent review of the relationship between the government and Te Kohanga Reo, which recommends that "devolution be completed within the next five years", meaning by 2006 (Crown/Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Joint Working Group, 2001, p. 4).

Expansion of Postgraduate Early Childhood Study

From the 1990s onwards, in part following the three-year Diploma becoming the benchmark, there has been an expansion of postgraduate courses in early childhood education offered by the universities. For many early childhood teacher educators, administrators, and practitioners, upgrading their qualifications to the benchmark qualification set them on the path of life-long learning. There have also been increases in the number of candidates undertaking masters' and doctoral level research degrees on early childhood topics.

Equal Treatment in the Reforms of Education Administration, 1989

Prior to 1986 in New Zealand, "care" was almost invariably treated "as the poor relation" or the "underside" in comparison with "education" services (May Cook, 1985, cited by Easting 1994). Similar unequal treatment of "care" and "education" was evident in many other countries (May Cook, 1985).

Education to Be More; Before Five

The main recommendations of the Meade report, Education to be More (Department of Education, 1988) are outlined in section 3 of this case study, where it is noted that equity was one of the key concepts in the terms of reference of the working group. Section 4 explains that Cabinet adopted most of the recommendations of Education to be More and that the policies are documented in Before Five (Lange, 1988), and section 5 outlines the implementation of Before Five policies.

The five-year staged funding package implemented, with its substantive funding increases during the first three years to services catering for children aged under two years, highlights the "more equal" status initially accorded to this sector of early childhood education. This aspect of New Zealand's integrated early childhood policy was associated with international attention and acclaim (May, 2001).

"Future Directions"

A project known as "Future Directions" initiated by the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI Te Riu Roa – the combined union for early childhood and primary school teachers) planned to address the continuing concerns about quality and inequalities. Following the government reforms of education, and the publication of reports by the Education Review Office (1993, 1996) questioning aspects of the quality in childcare centres, the NZEI brought together a project team to research and develop proposals regarding the future directions of early childhood education (New Zealand Educational Institute, 1996). Membership of the project team was inclusive of Kohanga Reo, some Pacific groups, and main early childhood groups (with the one exception of private-sector childcare).

The process included considerable community consultation. Key goals addressed in the recommendations were to achieve: universal funding for early childhood services; policies developed in partnerships involving government, providers, parents, and early childhood practitioners; and a strategic plan for early childhood education. The latter goal was set in train in 2001 when Government established a Working Group to help it develop a 10-year strategic plan.

An Early Childhood Curriculum For All, 1993-96

The integration of care and education under the Ministry of Education influenced the style of curriculum that was developed. In 1996 the Prime Minister launched the final version of Te Whaariki, the New Zealand national curriculum for children aged from birth to 5 years (Ministry of Education, 1996). Te Whaariki emerged following wide consultation by the co-directors of the Curriculum Development (Margaret Carr & Helen May) with early childhood practitioners, and from a strong consultative partnership between the developers and representatives of Te Kohanga Reo Trust, Tamati and Tilly Reedy (Carr, May, Podmore, et al., in press; Reedy, 1993; Reedy, 1995). It became clear during an official trialling process that the early childhood community strongly supported the document (May & Podmore, 2000).

The title Te Whaariki (suggested by Tamati Reedy) translates from the Maori language as "a woven mat for all to stand on". This curriculum includes overall Principles and Goals for all early childhood education and care programmes. Te Whaariki has four overall principles: empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships. Five strands shape the outcomes for children: Belonging—Mana Whenua, Well-being—Mana Atua, Exploration—Mana Aotuuroa, Communication—Mana Reo, and Contribution—Mana Tangata. In the curriculum document itself, the point is made that "the Whaariki concept recognises the diversity of early childhood education in New Zealand. Different programmes, philosophies, structures, and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whaariki." (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11).

The New Zealand early childhood curriculum became mandatory for chartered early childhood programmes in April 1998. More recently, close connections have been developed between the curriculum, children's assessment, and processes for teachers' self evaluation (e.g., Carr, 2001; Carr, May, & Podmore, et al., in press, Podmore & May, with Mara, 1998), and also processes for service evaluation The Quality Journey (Ministry of Education, 1999). These processes have been trialled and implemented across a range of early childhood services, including childcare centres, kindergartens, and playcentres (Carr et al., in press; May & Podmore, 2000; Meade & Grey et al., in press) and language immersion centres (Carr, 1998).

VII Impact and Subsequent Developments

Growth in Services

One subsequent development was the increased participation in early childhood education services, and an escalation in the number of childcare centres operating in New Zealand. As reported in a previous publication:

> In 1989, at the time of the major reforms to the administrative system for education in NZ, approximately 90% of four-year-olds, 61% of three-year-olds, and 40% of all children under the age of five attended an early childhood program....Less than a decade later, nearly all four-year-olds and over 80% of three-year olds were enrolled in some form of early childhood education. It is estimated that over half of NZ children aged 0 to 5 years were enrolled. Childcare centres became the dominant service.

> Enrolments were concentrated in centre-based childcare (36%), kindergartens (29%), and playcentres (11%). (Meade, 2000, pp.83-84)

The increased participation in childcare could be attributed to the increased participation of women in paid work and improved levels of government subsidy, making childcare more affordable.

These trends have continued, with an ongoing rise in childcare participation. Between 1990 and 1999, the average annual increase in the number of children enrolled in education and care centres (childcare) was 9.9%, with a rise from 32, 644 in 1990 to 76,630 in 1999. The average annual increase in kindergarten for the same period was 0.5%, and average annual participation in playcentres declined (-3.6%). Unlicensed centres/groups funded by the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECD) increased at an annual average rate of 10.3% for the same period, from 8,294 in 1990 to 19,965 in 1999 (these include license-exempt playcentres, Pacific Islands early childhood groups, and plagroups). (Ministry of Education, 2000).

There were related notable increases in the number of Pacific Islands children participating in early childhood education during this period. Between 1990 and 2000, the overall number of Pacific children enrolled in early childhood services increased by 80.9%, from 5,937 in 1990 to 10, 741 in 2000 (Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2001). Increased participation was evident primarily in Pacific Islands language groups and childcare centres (Sauvao, Mapa, & Podmore, 2000).

Alongside the growth in childcare was another trend: the rise of the kohanga reo. The first kohanga was opened in 1982, and by 1990 there were 618 kohanga reo services operating. During the period from 1990 to 1999, the numbers of children enrolled at kohanga reo continued to increase, on average by 2.3% each year. In 1990 there were 10,108 children, and by 1999 there were 12, 383 children enrolled at the kohanga reo (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Access and Quality

The growth in services is a positive trend, showing that increased numbers of children were accessing early childhood services. Concomitantly, there was rising concern among early childhood researchers and advocates, and policy makers, about the quality of early childhood education, and the impact of the growth on the outcomes for children.

In 1993-1994, both the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Education commissioned literature reviews on the topic of quality, to inform policy making (Podmore, 1993, 1994; Wylie, 1994). Research on quality of provision for infants and toddlers in childcare centres was also funded by the Ministry of Education (Podmore & Craig, 1991; Smith, 1996). The "Competent Children Study", also funded by the Ministry of Education, was launched to track a sample of 4-year-old children longitudinally (Henricks, Meade & Wylie, 1993). All of these Ministry-funded research initiatives were focused on the process and outcomes of early childhood education for the increasing numbers of young children participating in early childhood education services.

Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education

In 1999, prior to its election, the Labour party pledged to convene a working group to develop a strategic plan for early childhood education policy. A working group of 31 members – most of them came from key stakeholder organisations – developed a comprehensive and cohesive policy framework, goals and strategies for government consideration. Ad hoc changes in policy over the past 10 years had caused a number of significant difficulties, for example maintaining the political and individual resolve regarding the Diploma of Teaching (ECE) being the benchmark qualification for early childhood teachers in centre-based services.

The working group developed twenty strategies for Cabinet consideration. Their report to the Minister of Education (October 2001) set out four main future directions:

- Increased participation, engagement and access,
- Collaborative relationships (to support quality),
- Improved quality, and
- Sustainability of services.

There are three major themes to the proposals: enhancing policies and settings to facilitate the full implementation of *Te Whaariki*; changing systems to better coordinate the contributions of key adults to children's early learning and development; and transforming the role of government so that ECE is provided in partnership with Government. The proposals are that Government sets up some services itself and is far more proactive in planning and support. All the proposed strategies treat kindergarten and childcare in an even-handed way (although some variations are proposed for parent-run services, such as playcentres and nga kohanga reo).

VIII Remaining Issues and Challenges

The remaining issues and challenges include:

- improving the coordination across the Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Development, ERO, and ECD, all of which provide and/or fund services for families with young children;
- achieving even-handedness by the two Government funders of early childhood education; and
- improving policy coherence for early childhood education services so that policies are equitable for sessional and full-day early childhood education services.

Co-ordination across Ministries

In 1978, one theme of the New Zealand/OECD Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education was coordination of and cooperation amongst ECCE in New Zealand and selected other countries. By 1988, the scene was set for a relatively high level of coordination for the administration of early childhood education and childcare services. However, in 1998 there were still issues of coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Education Review Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, and local governments to address. These relate to their programmes for families with young children, such as early childhood education services, health and/or parenting education programmes, and services for children with disabilities. Too often these happen in isolation from one another, whereas improved coordination between service providers and early education providers would reduce the onus on parents of locating and coordinating different services.

The working group that developed a strategic plan for early childhood education in 2001 quickly identified issues related to poor coordination. The working group had this to say on the topic of collaborative relationships in their recent report to the Minister of Education

> Links between EC services and the compulsory education sector are largely informal and responsibilities are seldom shared. Communities of learning across this boundary are relatively rare. There are a large number of Government agencies, officials and contractors involved in licensing, funding, monitoring, evaluating and supporting [ECE] services. These can give inconsistent or even conflicting advice. Links between EC services and Government health and social development agencies and programmes

are weak. Agencies do not know gaps and overlaps in services provided or funded by Government.

We would be successful when: . . .

- Government agencies streamline requirements and provide co-ordinated and consistent advice and support for EC services. (Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001, p.8)

The recommendations of the Working Group include the following proposal:

> The Ministry of Education would work with the Ministries of Health and Social Development to co-ordinate efforts to improve linkages between early childhood services and other social services. The first stage would be to establish clear policy and operational frameworks that would support linkages between services. (Ibid, p. 16)

Coordination has proven difficult in the past. The current administrative context, where accountability for meeting measurable objectives is a widespread reality, could make joined-up activity even more difficult. Commentators have discerned the need for a partnership framework. Without it, little could change.

Even-Handedness by the Two Government Funders

The Ministry of Education pays a grant-in-aid to all licensed and chartered ECS, based on per child, per hour enrolments. There is an extra weighting for children aged under two years. Under this model, all ECS are on a similar footing[9]. In addition, a means-tested subsidy in lieu of fees is paid to services for families who meet a low-income criterion. The Government department responsible for welfare benefits pays this subsidy – called the childcare subsidy. The extent of the fees covered depends on the employment, study and/or health and disability status of the parents.

The continuation of this subsidy only for families using childcare services through the last decade has the effect of continuing to separate education and care, albeit in a limited way. This restriction of applying the childcare subsidy to childcare services appears to be a hangover from the days when childcare was the 'poor relation', funded at much lower rates. The fees subsidy being available only to families using services categorized as 'childcare' goes against the overall policy direction of treating all ECS equitably. Arguments about the childcare subsidy being an employment policy are weak in that a 1997 survey of families with young children found that childcare centres *and kindergartens* were the most common forms of ECS used for children from two parents families with both parents employed, at least one working part-time, which is the typical pattern for families with preschoolers. (Department of Labour/National Advisory Council for the Employment of Women, 1999, p. 23) The argument that it is for parents who are working full-time is weak as the childcare subsidy is paid to families using sessional services; indeed only a part-time subsidy is available unless parents are working full-time. Arguments about some kindergarten associations rejecting it are weak, as any such rejection would be those associations' decision not a policy decision (just as playcentre associations have rejected more than one source of Government funding).

Until all types of ECS can be offered free of charge – which is the vision expressed by the Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group (2001, p.31) - a fees subsidy will be necessary if cost is not to be a barrier to participation. However, we argue that a fees subsidy needs to be available to all families who pay fees,

[9] Sessional kindergartens receive more per hour per child, but the annual sum possible is capped and does not exceed the annual sum received by childcare centres per child where the subsidized hours per week and weeks per year can be far higher.

regardless of the type of service chosen, for the policy to be fair and equitable for families and for services.

Policy Coherence for Early Childhood Education Services

A case could be made for better concordance between the maximum hours funded per week by the two Ministries. The Ministry of Education's grant-in-aid to services is capped at 30 hours per week (similar to schools?) The Ministry of Social Development's (this is the latest name for what was the Department of Social Welfare) childcare subsidy for families is capped at 37 hours per week (close to a full-time working week). The respective orientations of the Ministry of Education (sessional) and the Ministry of Social Development (full-time) are indicated.

Of greater significance is progress towards pay parity for early childhood teachers. In mid-2001, the Government set up a working group to establish benchmarks and recommend a phased approach for implementation of pay parity for kindergarten teachers, to commence from 1 July 2002. This development is a result of employment negotiations. If childcare employers and employees do not move toward establishing benchmarks and implementing pay parity for staff with comparable qualifications, experience and responsibilities, childcare services could rapidly move towards being the 'poor relations' again, this time in terms of the quality of teachers they can recruit. Government has a role to play in ensuring that Ministry of Education funding is sufficient for any service employing early childhood teachers rated as being comparable to schoolteachers to be paid on comparable scales. Some advocates, for example the NZEI-TRR, want the Ministry of Education to be supportive of pay parity for childcare teachers as it is for kindergarten teachers.

This is a recommendation of Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group in order to minimise the risk to childcare services and families who use them.

Of similar significance is progress towards registration of early childhood teachers. In the Education Standards Act, 2001, provision is made for universal registration of early childhood teachers in order to give them equal status to schoolteachers. This begs the question: Who will be defined as being early childhood teachers? All educators in all ECS are required to follow a curriculum – that is, they teach children. Will all educators in all ECS be required to become registered, or only kindergarten teachers (most of whom meet the criteria for registration)? This situation presents yet another possibility for a wedge to be driven between childcare and kindergarten. (And between other ECS and kindergarten too.) The Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group recognised the possibility, and recommended that the definition of registered teachers should not be tied to type of ECS. Rather, it should be tied to the qualifications of the staff wherever they work. Its proposals are that Government policy be made where 60 percent of all staff counted in regulations by 2010 would be required to hold a teaching qualification and be registered, and 100 percent soon thereafter. If this proposal were to be adopted as policy, there would be minimal difference between childcare services and others in terms of the proportion of registered teachers they employ.

At the time of writing, the Minister of Social Development was also making statements to the media that his Ministry would be exploring childcare policy and other options to enhance the possibility of sole parents returning to paid work. If this policy development is not done in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, a gap may be created between childcare and other types of ECS if the Minister focuses on the types of ECS where there is a relationship with his Ministry because of the childcare subsidy.

In conclusion, a theme emerges that constant vigilance is needed to maintain integrated policy. Analysis suggests that 'settlement' of a fully-integration approach has never been completely achieved for two reasons. First, childcare is connected to women's employment in people's minds more strongly than are other types of ECS and therefore it is perceived to be more of a 'private good'. Second, childcare provision is

generally perceived to be a commercial business and therefore not a public service. No Government has taken the initiative to establish childcare services in a range of communities[10] to help change the general public's perception of childcare services being for women to seeing them as educational services for families.

IX Implications for Other Countries; Concluding Comments

In 1986, at the time of the transfer of childcare services to the Department of Education, New Zealand was clearly one of the few countries to initiate integrating the administration of early childhood education and care services within one government department. The reasons for this are both philosophical and practical. As documented by May (2001), in most other countries, "the historical and pedagogical divisions were too deep, and the advocates were less united than in New Zealand" (p.206).

Integration under one Ministry remains rare in general internationally, and within "developing" countries. In view of the experiences in New Zealand, benefits like enhanced co-ordination of services and recognition of the importance of early years' education may be associated with administrative integration under an education authority. However, this case study also elucidates a number of themes and issues to be considered.

The case study also highlights the importance of the local historical, socio-cultural, and political context. The introductory outline alluding to aspects of the early settlement of Aotearoa New Zealand refers to the Treaty of Waitangi, which has overarching obligations and principles of partnership between the Maori people and later settlers in this country. The story of the rise of the kohanga reo, together with the consequences for kohanga reo of the administrative integration of services under Education, form an integral part of New Zealand's case. (Each country will have its own context in which administrative decisions are made).

Philosophical and Pedagogical Issues

Traditionally, the values of early childhood education are not synonymous with those of school systems. Early childhood education has a history, linked to some extent to the child study movement and child observation studies, of a strong emphasis being placed on the nature of children and on the processes of learning. Conversely, educational curricula and testing in the school system have tended towards performance-based achievement models where the emphasis is on products of learning. These differences, and associated theories of learning and development, underpin concerns about the possible escalation of the "educationalisation" of early childhood through placing childcare services within the administrative auspices of education.

Curriculum

One crucial consideration is the scope and coverage and the type of curriculum to be implemented for early childhood. As Helen May (1999) has noted, in New Zealand, having "A national early childhood curriculum Te Whaariki (MOE, 1996) further endorsed the integration in every sense" (p. 20). It remains exceedingly rare for countries to give official recognition to a curriculum for infants and toddlers, and for countries to assume that an early childhood curriculum will be implemented with similar effectiveness in childcare centres and kindergartens (Meade, 2000). In New Zealand, the development and implementation of Te Whaariki as the national curriculum, inclusive for children from birth to (at least) 5 years, appears to have been a critical success factor.

[10] Government did fund the establishment phase of a limited number of childcare centres for public servants in the 1980s, in its role as employer. Annual discretionary grants-in-aid for capital costs are also made to community-based childcare centres nowadays, predominantly to Maori and Pacific services.

The type of curriculum has contributed to the pedagogical integration of care and education, and to the avoidance of "educationalisation" or a top-down approach to the learning and teaching of infants and young children. It is not a subject-based curriculum. Rather, it reflects the wider role of early childhood education: it focuses on empowering all involved to foster children's well-being and sense of belonging so that children become confident and competent communicators and learners.

Review

Review officers employed by the Education Review Office to evaluate early childhood services (and schools), where their background is a schools one, do not always understand the significance of the type of curriculum. From time to time, their reports have an unfortunate 'educationalisation' flavour. This was forecast by the working party chaired by Anne Meade in 1988, who recommended against the Education Review Office undertaking early childhood reviews. "The Meade report saw a potential problem ... [and thought] it likely to review early childhood services in a way which did not encourage their growth and development. In other words, the working party was concerned that [the Education Review Office] would be too heavy-handed and insufficiently sensitive to the particular characteristics of early childhood provision." (Easting, 1994, p.68)

Training

The administrative transfer of childcare to the Department of Education clearly impacted on the training levels expected of staff working in New Zealand childcare centres, and was influential in the initiation of a staged plan to implement integrated training at the tertiary level. Research on the benefits of early childhood education has consistently supported the importance of staff holding coherent qualifications, and having access to continued professional development (Podmore & Meade, with Kerslake Hendricks, 2000). The New Zealand experience indicates that attention to the level and quality of training of staff in childcare centres is a significant part of achieving a relatively full integration of care and education.

Community and Government Roles in Early Childhood Education

As already outlined in the introductory section of this case study, Government provision of early childhood educational services is rare in New Zealand. Community-based services with extensive voluntary participation are predominant, a number of childcare centres are operated for profit by individuals or companies, and the Correspondence School (a distance education service) has been the main provider owned by Government (see section 1 for further details).

Given the long tradition of community involvement and provision, in New Zealand, it is not surprising that the membership of the various consultative committees and working parties developing policy for early childhood has included representatives and participants from the early childhood communities and organisations. This level of involvement and consultation has been crucial to the relatively successful implementation of administrative integration under Education. It has also been an essential characteristic of a number of subsequent developments, including the development and implementation of *Te Whariki* the national early childhood curriculum, and the development of a strategic plan for early childhood education. These initiatives have required sensitive and skilled co-ordination across diverse early childhood groups to develop cohesive approaches.

Coordination and Government Department Structures

Co-ordination is an issue for early childhood centres, families, and communities. As documented in the final report of the Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group (2001) "improved links between EC services, parents, and whanau, parenting programmes, schools, ESOL providers, health and social services, can

improve child outcomes by enabling children's development needs to be met more holistically" (p. 41).

Inter-departmental co-ordination

There is some evidence in this case study that the administration of early childhood care and education services under one Ministry (Education) potentially may lead to initiatives to co-ordinate teacher education and curriculum development. As illustrated in the previous section, concerns related to co-ordination across Ministries and the need for coherence of policies, are continuing challenges facing New Zealand.

Further co-ordination across Government departments is a stated goal of the New Zealand Ministry of Education. The Ministry's current mission is to raise educational achievement and to reduce disparity, thereby addressing these Government strategic priorities:

- Improve New Zealanders' skills
- Reduce inequalities in health, education, employment, and housing

The Ministry of Education's work "also contributes to three other key Government goals". One of these is:

- Strengthen national identity and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

One of the Ministry's continuing intentions outlined in its current forecast report is that it will "work alongside other government departments to ensure a coordinated approach" (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15).

These priorities and intentions illustrate an ongoing focus on interdepartmental co-ordination following the administrative integration of early childhood education and care under the Ministry of Education. In developing countries, continuing co-ordination, for example with the department administering Health, would similarly remain an issue relevant to addressing the well-being of young children in a holistic way.

Intra-departmental administrative structures

Administrative structures within the education department/ministry are another issue. The Director of Early Childhood Education at the time of the transition, reflecting on the New Zealand experience, advocated the importance of "having an early childhood directorate within the Ministry of Education" (personal communication, November, 2001). Moreover, perspectives presented in the papers from the 1985 Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education supported the need for the early childhood directorate to be accorded higher status within the Ministry of Education (Department of Education, 1985).

Funding and Long-term Outcomes of Early Childhood Education

International research evidence on the long-term benefits of early childhood care and education was influential in New Zealand at the time of the integration of early childhood education and care under the auspices of the Department of Education. Access to high quality early childhood education was tending to be viewed, both by early childhood researchers, practitioners, and advocates and also by some key Government officials at the time, as a long-term investment in the country's future. It was logically and financially consistent with this focus on long-term educational and social outcomes, for early childhood care and education to be administered by the education authority.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory was also influential in presenting a holistic vision for early childhood education in this country. Education to be More categorized the benefits of early childhood education as being for children, parents/whanau, and for society. Te Whariki, the first national curriculum statement for

the early childhood sector, is a socio-cultural curriculum reflecting the importance of family and community and the holistic way children learn.

Whether integrating early childhood into the education authority has the practical advantage of increasing the budget for early childhood care and education provision is a complex issue. The New Zealand case does show that funding increases to the sector have accompanied new initiatives. In 1985, the Government's budget included a relatively substantial increase of NZ$2.7 million funding for childcare. However, in the 1991 budget, the Government's staged plan for funding ceased.

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